

**OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
PORTFOLIO**

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio:
 - (a) In October, I chaired a Talking Together event on the subject of Renewable Energy. Consultants Entec presented the interim findings of a report they have been commissioned to produce considering potential future demand, supply and capacity within Darlington for renewable energy. The aim of the event was to raise the community's understanding of the need for renewable energy in Darlington, particularly the different types of technologies that are available to help us meet government targets to reduce CO2 emissions and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Various groups and stakeholders attended and participated in workshop discussions around the issues. The feedback from the event will inform the final report, which will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework.
 - (b) Progress continues on the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, which provides a systematic approach to assessing the Council's carbon footprint and, ultimately, will identify opportunities for managing a reduction through an agreed action plan. Officers have attended the latest national 'Sharing Intelligence' event and the regional quantification surgery, during which quantification techniques and issues arising related to quantifying potential projects for carbon reduction were discussed. The nine month programme is due to be completed next March, with a report to Cabinet, setting out the Council's Action Plan of Projects.

I can further inform Council that I have been liaising with Cabinet colleagues and relevant officers regarding Council's approach to reducing its energy consumption. This work has the potential to have an impact both on the authority's carbon footprint, and also its revenue spend. I will report further to Council as this work progresses.
 - (c) I attended the LSP Greener Theme Group meeting in September, which focussed on the 'local food' agenda. Following brief presentations on the emerging Allotment Strategy for the borough, and more general issues around local food, the meeting discussed the potential way forward. The Group agreed to the setting up of a sub-group to lead on these issues with a view to it reporting back to the main group with proposed actions/initiatives.
 - (d) In mid-September I attended the launch of the Grow Zone project at Lingfield Point, at which the Mayor planted a plum tree to mark the inauguration of the project. Grow Zone is a community-based food growing initiative, organised by Darlington Friends of the Earth in partnership with site owners Marchday, responding to the surge in

demand from residents wanting to grow their own food. Around 30 people who are on allotment waiting lists have signed up to participate in Grow Zone, which will be operational from Spring 2010 and run for two years, after which the land is scheduled for housing development with permanent allotments as part of Marchday's Master Plan for Lingfield Point. The launch was a well-attended and enjoyable community event. I can further inform Council that 2 Grow Zone 'Get Togethers' have been arranged at Lingfield Point on Saturday 6th December and Saturday 12th December, both from 10am to 3pm. Peter Roberts, who is co-ordinating the work, advises that the group now has plenty of topsoil and big gro-bags on site, and they will be filling bags and allocating spaces ready for future planning on this date. If you are intending to go along, then please contact Peter Roberts in advance on 481267 or by email via peter.edendays@googlemail.com.

- (e) Since the implementation of the new Recycling service and the introduction of the mechanical biological treatment plant in September, the early indications are that the new service is working well and residents have adopted the new system with very few problems.

The infrastructure at the MBT plant is also performing well, and later in November I will be present at the formal opening in late November or early December. I would hope that all councillors, and members of the public, will have an opportunity to visit the fully-functioning plant in the New Year. I will keep members informed of opportunities in this respect.

- 2. The following items relate to initiatives that are contributing to the Climate Change Agenda, details of which are covered in other Portfolio reports.

Transport

- (a) School Travel Planning and Workplace Travel Plans;
- (b) Supported bus services;
- (c) Tees Valley Metro and Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement;
- (d) Bike Club Officer, Bike It Officer; Cycle Demonstration Town; and Cycle to Work Guarantee.
- (e) Bus tickets – Multi-operator ticket; Scarlet Band Discount ticket, Teencard extension.

Fire Authority

- 3. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended 2 meetings of the Durham and Darlington Fire Authority, including a meeting of its Performance Review Sub-Committee.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio